

The BUNNYS at HOME

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By

JOHN H. JEWETT



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THE BUNNYS AT HOME





CUDDLEDOWN

THE
BUNNYS at HOME

BY
JOHN H. JEWETT
AUTHOR OF "THE BUNNY STORIES," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR
AND BLACK-AND-WHITE
BY CULMER BARNES



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THE BUNNYS AT HOME

I

THE home of the Bunny family was once a sunny hillside, overrun with wild-rose bushes and berry-vines, with a little grove of white birches, pines, and other trees, on the north side, to shelter it from the cold winds of winter.

The place had no name of its own until the Bunnys and their neighbors found it out, and came there to live.

After that, it became much like any other thickly settled neighborhood, where all the families had children and all the children ran

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

wild, and so they called it "Runwild Terrace."

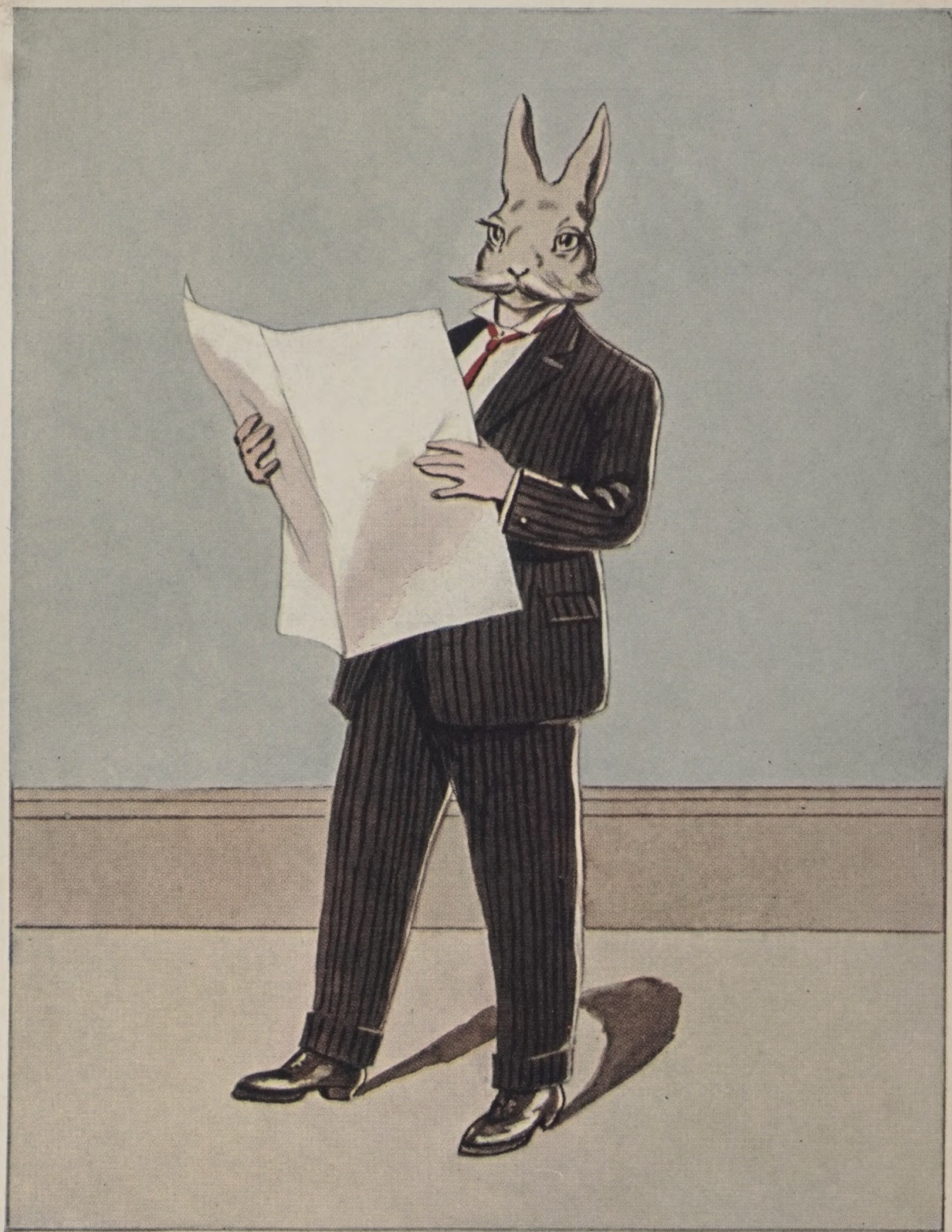
This was a long time ago, when all the wild creatures talked with each other, and behaved very much as people do nowadays, and were for the most part kind and friendly to each other.

Their wisest and best teachers used to tell them, as ours tell us now, that they all belonged to one great family, and should live in peace like good brothers and sisters.

I am afraid, however, they sometimes forgot the relationship, just as we do when we are proud or greedy or ill-natured, and were sorry for it afterward.

The Bunnys of Runwild Terrace were very much like all the rest—plain, sensible, and well-bred folks.

The father and mother tried to set a good



DEACON BUNNY

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

example by being quiet and neighborly, and because they were always kind to the poor and sick, they were called "Deacon Bunny" and "Mother Bunny" by their friends and neighbors.

The Bunny children were named Bunny-boy, who was the eldest, Brownny, his brother, and their sisters, Pinkeyes and Cuddledown; and their parents were anxious that the children should grow up to be healthy, honest, truthful, and good-natured.

They were a happy family, fond of each other, and of their Cousin Jack, who lived with them.

One of Cousin Jack's legs was shorter than the other, and he had to use a pair of crutches to help him walk or hop about, but he was very nimble on his "wooden legs," as he called

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

them, and could beat most of the bunnies in a race on level ground.

He had been lame so long, and almost everyone was so kind to him because he was a cripple, that he had got used to limping about, and did not mind being called "Lame Jack," by some of the thoughtless neighbors.

The Bunny family, however, always called him "Cousin Jack," which was a great deal better and kinder, because no one really likes to be reminded of a misfortune, or to wear a nickname, like a label on a bottle of medicine.

Cousin Jack was a jolly, good-natured fellow, and the bunnies all liked him because he was so friendly and cheerful, and willing to make the best of everything that happened to go wrong.

If it rained and spoiled the croquet fun, or

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

upset the plans for a picnic, Cousin Jack would say, "Well, well; I don't think it is going to be much of a flood; let us have a little home-made sunshine indoors until the shower is over."

Then he would help them make a boat, or a kite, and mend the broken toys, or tell them stories, until they would forget all about the disappointment, and say that a day with him was almost as good fun as a picnic.

Besides a pleasant home and many kind friends, these fortunate bunnies had no end of beautiful books, pretty toys, and games, and best of all, a loving, patient mother, to watch over them and care for them as only a mother can.

With so many things in their lives to help them to be good, they had no excuse for not

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

growing up to be a comfort to the family and a credit to the neighborhood, and I think they did.

At any rate, they had lots of fun, and these stories about them are told to show other little folks how the bunnies behaved, and what happened to them when they were good or naughty.





PINKEYES

II

EVER since Bunnyboy and Brownny were old enough to dig in the dirt, they had made a little flower-garden every year, in a sunny spot on the south side of the house. Pinkeyes used to watch her brothers taking care of the flower-beds, and soon learned to love the pretty grasses and leaves and buds and the smell of the freshly spaded earth, and one day she said she would like to have a flower-bed of her own.

It was almost winter, however, before she thought of it, and remembered that it takes

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

time for plants to grow and blossom, and that the gardens in the north where she lived were covered with snow and ice in the winter.

When Pinkeyes wanted anything she wanted it in a hurry, and so she asked her father what flowers came earliest after the snow was gone.

He told her that of all the wild flowers, the fragrant pink and white arbutus was first to peep out from under the dead leaves and grass, to see if the spring had come.

Sometimes the buds were in such a hurry to get a breath of the mild spring air, and a glimpse of the sunshine, that a tardy snow-storm caught them with their little noses uncovered, and gave them a taste of snow-broth and ice, without cream, that made them chilly



THE BUNNIES ALL LIKED COUSIN JACK

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

until the warm south winds and the sun had driven the snow away.

Pinkeyes said she wanted a whole garden of arbutus, but her father told her that this strange, shy wildling did not like gardens, but preferred to stay out in the fields, where it could have a whole hillside tangle or pasture to ramble in, and plenty of thick grass and leaves to hide under when winter came again.

When her father saw how disappointed she was, he told her if she would try to be good-natured and patient when things went wrong, they would get some crocus-bulbs and put them in the ground before the frost came, and in the spring she would have a whole bed of white and yellow and purple crocuses, which were earlier even than the arbutus, if properly cared for.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

Ever so many times in the winter, when the children were enjoying the snow and ice, Pinkeyes wondered what her crocus-bulbs were doing down under the ground, and if they would know when it was spring and time to come up.

After the snow was gone she watched every day for their coming, and sure enough, one morning there were little rough places on the crocus bed, and the next day she found a row of delicate green shoots and tiny buds trying to push themselves up out of the ground.

Every day they grew bigger and prettier, and more of them came up, until there were enough to spare some of each color for a bouquet, without spoiling the pretty picture they made out of doors, where everybody who



Every day they grew bigger and prettier.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

came that way could see and enjoy the flowers, and be sure that spring had really come.

The very first handful she picked was put into a bowl of water, and looked very fresh and dainty on the breakfast-table.

Pinkeyes felt quite proud of her first crocus-blossoms, and almost cried when her mother said that it would be a kind thing to do, to take them over to neighbor Woodchuck, whose children were sick and who had no crocus bed on their lawn to look at while they had to stay in the house to get well.

Pinkeyes thought it would be a good excuse for not doing so, to say she did not know the way; for she had never been so far away from home alone; but her father said he was going over that way and would take her with him, if she wished to carry the flowers to the tired



BROWNY

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

mother and the sick children; and so they started off with the crocuses carefully wrapped in soft damp cotton to keep them fresh.

When Pinkeyes handed the flowers to Mrs. Woodchuck, she said: "Here is the first bunch of blossoms we have picked from my crocus bed, and my mother thought that you would like to have some to brighten the room while the children are sick, and we have plenty more at home."

The family were all delighted with the flowers and the kind attention, for they had not seen anything so bright and cheery for a long time, and they all thanked Pinkeyes so heartily that she felt ashamed to remember how unwilling she had been at first to give the crocuses away.



“Here is the first bunch of blossoms we have picked.”

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

When she came home she told her mother about the call, and how pleased they were with the simple gift; and her mother asked her how many crocuses she had left in the bed, and she said, "More than twenty." Then her mother asked how many she had given away, and she said, "Only six," and Pinkeyes began to see what her mother meant, and that a little given away made one happier than a great deal kept all to one's self.

Then Pinkeyes went out and looked at those left growing in the bed, and whispered softly to them, "Now I know what flowers are made for." And all the little buds looked up at her as if to say, "Tell us, if you know"; and so she whispered again the answer, "To teach selfish folks to be kind and generous, and to make sick folks glad."

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

Every day new buds opened, and Pinkeyes had a fresh bouquet each morning, and also enough to give away, until the other flower-beds which her brothers had planted began to bear blossoms for the summer.



III

BROWNLY took more interest in the flower-garden than Bunnyboy, who was older and liked to play circus, and croquet, and to watch base-ball games; and so Brownly began to take care of the flower-beds alone.

He liked to plant new seeds and watch them come up, and wait for the buds to open, but the hardest part of the work was to keep the neighbors' hens away from the lawn.

These hens seemed to think there was no place like a freshly made flower-bed to scratch holes to roll in; and when no one was

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

looking they would walk right out of a large open corn-field, where there was more loose earth than they could possibly use, and begin to tear that flower-garden to pieces.

One old yellow hen, that was lazy and clumsy about everything else, would work herself tired, every time she could get in there, trying to bury herself in the soft loam of the garden.

Brownny's father, Deacon Bunny, told Brownny he might scare the hens away as often as they came, but must not hurt them with clubs or stones, because they belonged to their good neighbor Coon.

Brownny thought it was strange that a good neighbor should keep such a mischievous hen as Old Yellow; but the Deacon said that people who kept hens in a crowded neighbor-



BUNNYBOY



Trying to bury herself in the soft loam.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

hood, and let them run at large, usually cared more about fresh eggs and other things to eat than for flowers, and as a rule, such people did not lie awake at night thinking about the trouble their hens gave other folks.

One day, when Brownny was complaining about the yellow hen, Bunnyboy came rushing in to ask his father to get a croquet set, and said their lawn was just the place for a good croquet ground.

The Deacon said at once that he thought it would be a good place, and if the neighbors' children would all turn out and enjoy the game with them, the plan Bunnyboy suggested might help to rid them of the daily hen-convention on the lawn, and save the flower-beds. The next day he brought the croquet set.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

When the Bunnys opened their new croquet box, they found four mallets and four balls, and nine arches and two stakes, all painted and striped with red, white, blue and yellow, to match each other.

The first thing they did was to begin quarrelling lustily about who should have the first choice, for each of the players preferred the blue ball and mallet.

When the Deacon heard the loud talking on the lawn, he came out, shut up the box and said the croquet exercises would not begin until they could behave themselves, and settle the question of the first choice like well-bred children, without any more wrangling.

Bunnyboy happened to remember that he was the oldest, and said the best way was to give the youngest the first choice and so on.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

The Deacon said that was all right, and that they were all old enough to learn how much happier it makes everyone feel to be yielding and generous, even in little things, than to be selfish and try to get one's own way in everything.

So they all agreed, and each bunny took a mallet and began a game, and they had rare fun knocking the balls about, trying to drive them through the arches without pushing them through, which was not fair play.

By and by Chivy Woodchuck and his brother Chub heard the clatter, and came over to see the fun, and wanted to play with them.

Then came the question, who should play, and who should not, for all six could not play with but four mallets. Of course the visitors



The first thing they did was to begin quarrelling lustily.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

should have first place, and two of the Bunnys must give up their mallets and balls.

Bunnyboy tried to settle it by asking Pink-eyes and Cuddledown to go into the kitchen and tease the cook for some ginger cakes, while the others played a game. They liked this plan, and so the boys each had a mallet and the game went on nicely, until Chivy Woodchuck knocked the red ball into the muddy gutter and the other side refused to go and get it. Then another dispute began.

Bunnyboy thought Chivy ought to get the ball, and Chivy said Bunnyboy ought to get it himself; and so, instead of keeping good-natured, they stood sulking and scolding until the other children came back.

When Cuddledown heard the talking, she went and picked up the muddy ball, wiped it



Cuddledown went and picked up the muddy ball.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

on her dress, and brought it back to the lawn, just as the Deacon came out to see what the new quarrel was about.

Bunnyboy and Chivy were so ashamed of having made such a fuss about doing a little thing that the youngest bunny could do in a minute without being asked, that they begged each other's pardon, and went on with the game.

Deacon Bunny told Cuddledown that she was a good child to get the ball and stop the dispute, and that she had begun early to be a little peace-maker; but the next time she had a muddy ball to clean she should wipe it on the grass instead of her dress, because it was easier for the rain to wash the grass than for busy mothers to keep their children clean and tidy.

THE BUNNYS AT HOME

All the summer they had jolly times with the croquet, but the old yellow hen did not like having so many little folks around, and had to hunt up a new place to scratch holes to roll herself in.

But Brownny had both a flower- and vegetable-garden next year, and the old yellow hen never troubled him any more.







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